

The Creation of Unionism

Male Voice:

Somewhere, sometime, one man performed a service of work for another. Originally, it must have been a favor. As numbers of people increased, favors were bartered between strangers. People's needs multiplied, as did people. Money was introduced because it made bartering easier and more convenient. Gradually, money attained the value of its own in the marketplace. Bartering slowly disappeared. Money became the medium of exchange. Systems of wealth developed with the passing of centuries. Some families became very rich. Most remain poor. As populations increased tenfold, more men than ever found themselves born to economic misery. Finally, the impoverished revolted. They gutted the greedy systems of wealth that had become aloof. Capitalism and industrial democracy emerged from the ruins. For the first time it became possible for a poor man to become rich through work. Yet most men remained poor. Then working men realized they had one strength they had never exercised. And so they created unionism. Take 2. And so they created unionism. They began to call each other brother. To the employers for whom they worked, the members of the Union said together, we want a living wage, we want less hours to work, and we want better working conditions. In short, they began to bargain their labor collectively. There was bitter opposition to the unions. Union men and women and their children suffered through generations of stubborn effort to honorably gain a better standard of living. Unionism became a success through their courage and sacrifice. Remembering that people were the origin of its strength and admitting that workers benefited from unionism. The government eventually gave legal recognition to unions. Then to the employers, the workers said collectively, we want our jobs to be secure, we want health insurance, we want pensions. We want paid vacations. Most of all, they said, we want to be able to give our children better educations. This is where we are now. The progress has been slow and difficult. It took centuries to reach the last 100 years and proved that only through unions can working people step up from poverty. Yet even with this achievement, there are still too many working for pennies and wondering why? This would be the take 2. Somewhere, sometime, one man performed a service of work for another. Originally, it must have been a favor. As numbers of people increased, favors were bartered between strangers. People's needs multiplied, as did people. Money was introduced because it made bartering easier and more convenient. Gradually, money attained a value of its own in the marketplace. Bartering slowly disappeared. Money became the medium of exchange. Systems of wealth developed with the passing of centuries. Some families became very rich. Most became poor. Take 2. Most remain poor. As populations increased tenfold, more men than ever found themselves born to economic misery. Finally, the impoverished revolted. They gutted the greedy systems of wealth that had become aloof.

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